

Section 3.2.4.

Historic Preservation Element

Pursuant to Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes.

Background Discussion

The data and analyses for this element of the *Sanibel Plan*, pursuant to *Section 163.3177(7)(1), Florida Statutes*, are provided in this subsection.

Sanibel has a rich historical heritage dating from the first settlements of the Caloosa Indians to the small agricultural, fishing and resort community of the first half of the 20th century.

Sanibel's history over the past century has been one of alternate growth and decline. About 1888, agricultural development started and spread over the next 40 years to all of the Island's arable land. During this period, several hurricanes with accompanying flood tides ranging from nine to 13 feet high struck Sanibel. The last hurricane of that period, in 1926, changed the course of the Island's history, inundating the entire Island with saltwater. After this disaster, many of the residents of the Island were financially ruined and forced to leave. The remainder stayed to seek a livelihood serving winter visitors and tourists.

Little growth occurred between 1927 and 1944, when the permanent resident population is reported to have been 100, except for a gradual increase in the number of visitors and development of cottages along the shore. In the 1950s, Sanibel's reputation for shell collecting and tourism grew, with a parallel development of residents and services.

Until this time, most buildings were constructed on the Island's higher land elevations, approximately five feet above sea level. This pattern changed radically after construction of the Causeway in 1963, when a development boom began on the Island. Land was developed that earlier residents had wisely avoided. The effect of the *Sanibel Plan* and flood regulations has resulted in a return to the use of piling structures, including the raised elevation of multi-storied buildings.

Historic remnants are not merely objects of interest to a pedantic chronicler, an antiquary or a passing tourist. They are testimonies of successful adaptations by past generations and thus can act as beacons to guide present and future generations in their striving to attain a fitting adaptation to the environment. This is particularly true on a barrier island such as Sanibel where structures are vulnerable to destructive tropical storms and hurricanes. Many of the remaining structures are of historic significance because they are irreplaceable as resources of educational importance and evidence of human survival through past disasters. Those structures that remain provide an important lesson in survival. The Caloosa Indians obtained additional elevation for their houses by building mounds of shells. Most surviving structures from the late 19th century were built on high ground or elevated above flood tides on piling. The Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters (1884), the Bailey House (1896) and the Cooper Homestead (1891) are all examples of successful adaptation. These historic sites and structures, among others, are irreplaceable resources that should be maintained for future residents and visitors.

The Historical Preservation Committee has been formed to establish guidelines for registration, classifying and setting priorities for preservation. The following sites and structures have been placed on the historic site list.

**Local Register of
Historic Sites and Structures**

Landmark	Date of Inclusion
Indian Mound "A"	March 19, 1991
O. Bowen Grave	May 21, 1991
Bailey House	May 21, 1991
Cooper Homestead	May 21, 1991
Black School	May 21, 1991
White School	May 21, 1991
Nutt Homestead	May 21, 1991
1910 Post Office	May 21, 1991
Community House	May 19, 1992
Sanibel Community Church	May 19, 1992
Rutland Graves	May 19, 1992
The Beach House	May 19, 1992
Shore Haven	May 19, 1992
Bailey Store	May 19, 1992
Miss Charlotta's Tea Room	May 19, 1992
White Heron House	September 7, 1993
Morning Glories Cottage	March 4, 2003
Rutland Home	March 4, 2003
The Burnap Cottage	March 4, 2003

Source: Local Register of Historic Landmarks

The following sites and structures were identified in the 1976 *Sanibel Plan*, as follows

**Historic Sites and Structures
identified in the 1976 Sanibel Plan**

Sanibel Lighthouse, Brick Hut and Keeper's Quarters:
Point Ybel.

Wulfert Cemetery: Wulfert Peninsula.

Sanibel Cemetery: off Casa Ybel Road.

Clarence Rutland House: Moved to City Hall Site
(Settler's Museum) in 1982.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters and some Indian
Mounds on federal property receive protection.

The Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters are also listed on
the National Register of Historic Places.

Source: 1976 Sanibel Plan

There are additional sites and structures that may be considered by the Sanibel Historical Society for inclusion in the Local Register of Historic Sites and Structures. The City should protect these and other historic sites by making historical evaluations in accordance with the priorities recommended by the Florida Department of State. Those not protected by Federal or State law should be covered by City Ordinance.

Historic preservation includes more than preserving historic buildings. The City's roadways, particularly the arterial and collector roads, still retain their rural character. As two lane

roads, these up-to-date transportation facilities contribute significantly to the historical character of the City of Sanibel. Retaining the City's historic roadways contributes to the City's historic preservation efforts.

In general, the Gulf beaches on Sanibel still retain their natural characteristics. Retaining the natural Gulf beach also complements the City's historic preservation efforts.

The assemblage of the Sanibel Historical Village and Museum and the restoration of its historic structures is nearly complete. The three structures added to the Local List of Historic Sites and Structures, since the Sanibel Plan was extensively revised in 1997, are at the Historical Village. These structures are the Rutland House, Burnap Cottage and Morning Glories Cottage. The Old Schoolhouse for White Children, recently used as a theater, has been moved to the Historical Village. This historic landmark has been restored and is open to the public. In 2012, Shore Haven and its ancillary Caretaker's Cottage were relocated to the Sanibel Historical Village.

The City has acquired the Sanibel Lighthouse and Keeper's Quarters and the surrounding grounds.

The Sanibel Historical Museum and Village, Inc. [a 501(c) 3] operates the Sanibel Historical Village located on the City Hall site.

Provisions of the Plan for Historic Preservation

1. Maintain a list of Sanibel's historic sites and places with a historical resume and documentation of each.
2. Historic resources should receive the same consideration and protection as natural resources from City departments and official committees.
3. Periodically review this list for updating, additions or deletions.
4. Make historical evaluations in accordance with the priorities recommended by the Florida Department of State.
5. Work with the Florida Department of State to nominate the most valuable historic structures, sites or areas to the National Register of Historic Places, the State Inventory of Historic Sites or another list or designation as appropriate.
6. Notify owners of the property of its historic value and seek their cooperation utilizing the incentive program established by City Council Resolution 92-111.
7. Continue to protect and preserve the irreplaceable historic resources of Sanibel.
8. Maintain an Island Historical Village and Museum that includes historical and archeological exhibits. (The Clarence Rutland House, moved to the City Hall site in 1982, was officially dedicated as the Island Historical Museum on November 10, 1984. Other structures have since been assembled on the grounds to create the village.)

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal Statement

Protect and appropriately use historic resources to ensure their preservation as the development anticipated in the Future Land Use Element of the Plan occurs.

Objective 1

Protect historic and archaeological resources, including structures, sites, roadways and beaches to ensure continued preservation and sensitive use and reuse of these resources.

Policy 1.1. First consideration should be given to retaining the designated historical structure in its historical setting and context.

Policy 1.2. Maintain the requirements of the Land Development Code and the City's historical preservation program designed to protect and preserve the archeological and historical resources on Sanibel.

Policy 1.3. Ensure continued visual access to privately owned cultural and historic resources.

Policy 1.4. Retain a design in the historic roadway system that preserves the historic character of the roadways and surrounding land uses.

Policy 1.5. Retain the natural character of the Gulf beaches for their significant contribution to the historical character of the City of Sanibel.

